

under the following headings: diabetes; hyperlipidaemia; liver disease; cardiovascular and respiratory problems; endocrinology; joint and bone diseases; psychological consequences. In addition, there is a final section dealing with the complications associated with the treatment of obesity, including surgical treatment.

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**Psychiatry in General Medical Practice**

G Usdin & J M Lewis (ed) pp 771 £14.95

London: McGraw-Hill 1980

This is a book written, with one exception, by American psychiatric specialists for American general practitioners whose conditions of practice differ in many respects from those of their British counterparts. The advice given is not therefore always relevant to the United Kingdom – for instance, how many NHS practitioners would undertake routine premarital examinations including ‘a thorough medical, reproductive and social history, as well as a complete physical and pelvic examination [and] laboratory tests’?

As with all multiauthor volumes, there are some very good chapters and some not so very good. I would single out the following as being of particular merit: ‘The response to life stress’ by R J Arthur; ‘Physical disease manifesting as psychiatric disorders’ by M J Martin; ‘Normal sleep and sleep disorders’ by W C Dement; ‘Diseases and illnesses specific to women’ by C C Nadelson & M T Notman; and ‘The physician and the treatment of sexual dysfunctions’ by H S Kaplan & M A Perelman. Psychopharmacology is comprehensively reviewed by M A Lipton and K O Jobson, but I was a little disappointed to find no mention of the ‘second generation’ antidepressants that are becoming firmly established in psychopharmacological practice in this country.

The book is presumably intended in the main for general practitioners, and, in view of the lack of psychiatric training given to medical students in this country, much of the content of this book will be very helpful to them.

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**Practical Clinical Biochemistry, vol 1 5th edn**

H Varley, A Gowenlock & M Bell pp 1277 £30

London: Heinemann Medical 1980

This long-awaited book replaces the previous four editions by Harold Varley which have appeared over the last 26 years. The 5th edition, in which A H Gowenlock and M Bell are coauthors, is in two parts. Volume 2, which was published in 1976, deals with hormones, vitamins and drugs. Volume

1 covers general topics and common tests in a bulky 1277 pages.

The result is a comprehensive, encyclopaedic guide to practical clinical biochemistry for laboratory workers. The book begins with an informative chapter on laboratory hazards which, with typical thoroughness, includes tables of dangerous chemicals and even the statutory requirements of a first-aid box. This is followed by a series of excellent chapters which summarize the principles of chromatography, electrophoresis, spectrophotometry, immunological techniques, work simplification, automation and radioisotopes. A convenient list of the addresses of instrument manufacturers is included. There then follow sections on ‘normal’ ranges, statistics, quality control and specimen collection.

Everywhere, there is attention to detail. The methodology section opens with five principal ways of measuring glucose; these are further subdivided into various modifications. This painstaking cataloguing of methods is characteristic and continues through the range of common laboratory tests. I would have preferred outdated methods to have been omitted, or at least mentioned briefly with a bibliographic reference.

Inspection of the bibliography testifies to the long period of gestation of this volume since few references derive from the last few years. Nevertheless, this is a magnificent work which is an obligatory bench book for all hospital and medical research laboratories.

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**Aetiopathogenesis of Osteoarthritis**

George Nuki (ed) pp 200 £15

London: Pitman Medical 1980

Professor Nuki was stimulated by recent work on the aetiology of osteoarthritis – no longer a ‘dull, degenerative disorder’ – to collect together dissertations on newer knowledge of the subject. The content of this book is illustrated by this abstract from the foreword: ‘the role of ageing and genetic factors are critically reviewed and recent work on biochemical factors such as a fatigue failure of the collagen fibre network and stiffening of subchondral bone as a result of microfractures induced by repetitive impulse loading are described . . . biochemical and physical changes in cartilage are considered . . . evidence of an immunological basis for cartilage damage is presented and mineral metabolism, apatite extrusion and crystal synovitis are discussed’.

Contributors distinguished in this research include S Y Ali on matrix vesicles in cartilage, Paul Dieppe and others on the inflammatory component of osteoarthritis, Ehrlich and Mankin